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FROM: Richard Ho, Assistant Commissioner
Office for Policy and Program

THROUGH: Gerald W. Robinson, Commissioner

SUBJECT: PROFILES OF CHILDREN ADOPTED AND CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED GUARDIANSHIPS DURING FY'91

The contents of this report describe the characteristics of children who were adopted or had guardianships appointed during FY'91 (July 1, 1990 - June 30, 1991). Demographic characteristics include: sex, ethnicity/race, preferred language, sibling groups, and the age of the children at the time of legalized adoption or guardianship granted. Also included is the type of adoptive home (unrelated foster home, relative, or recruited), the amount of time spent in substitute care prior to the adoption or guardianship, and information on adoption or guardianship subsidies.

Questions or comments may be directed to Mary Grudzinskas at the Research, Evaluation, and Planning Unit at (617) 727-0900, Extension 416. Requests for additional copies may be made to the Research, Evaluation, and Planning Unit at Central Office, (617) 727-0900, Extension 422.

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PROFILES

OF

CHILDREN ADOPTED

AND

CHILDREN WITH GUARDIANSHIPS GRANTED

IN

FY'91

The Department of Social Services (DSS) was established in 1980 with a primary mission to protect children and to strengthen families. Families are assisted through a variety of supportive services aimed at creating a safe, nurturing environment for their children. In some instances, neither in-home service nor temporary substitute care are adequate to maintain or reunite a family. In such cases, DSS obtains permanent custody of the child(ren) and develops an appropriate permanent plan for them. DSS supports three alternative plans for children who cannot be returned home: adoption, guardianship, and supervised independent living. The permanent plan outcomes analyzed in this statistical report are adoption and guardianship.

ADOPTION

During FY'91, DSS finalized adoptions for 595 children. This is the highest number completed in the history of DSS.

Adoptions for the past 11 years are depicted below:

FISCAL YEAR	NUMBER OF ADOPTIONS	% CHANGE
1980[1]	279	--
1981	523	+87%
1982	570	+9%
1983	539	-5%
1984	435	-19%
1985	400	-8%
1986	412	+3%
1987	460	+12%
1988	536	+22%
1989	589	+10%
1990	554	-6%
1991	595	+7%

[1]Adoptions completed under the Massachusetts Department of Public Welfare

The 595 adoptions[2] completed in Fiscal Year 1991 were legalized in the following geographic locations:

West	=	211
Northeast	=	170
Southeast	=	81
Boston/Brookline	=	118

Western Massachusetts increased adoption activity by 9% over FY'90. Adoptions also rose in Northeastern Massachusetts and Boston/Brookline by 8% and 22%, respectively. The remaining geographic location, Southeastern Massachusetts, declined (-18%) in the number of finalized adoptions.

Of the 595 children adopted, 290 (49%) were members of 130 sibling groups. Adoptions of siblings rose 8% over FY'90.

SEX, AGE, AND LOCATION

Although the proportion of boys and girls are equal in the caseload, slightly more boys were adopted than girls, 51% vs. 48%. (Appendix, Table 1 and Fig. 1) This is opposite FY'90 where girls adopted exceeded boys, 53% vs. 46%. Ninety-one percent of the children adopted in FY'91 were under 13 years old.

Compared to FY'90, legalized adoptions statewide rose in virtually all age groups. Adoptions of children age 3-5 increased 20% during FY'91 (Appendix, Table 2). Adoptions of older children (i.e., over age nine) increased also, slightly, by 9%.

LANGUAGE AND ETHNICITY

English was identified as the preferred language in 88% (523) of all adopted children. Twenty-four children (4%) spoke Spanish, one Portuguese, one Haitian-Creole, one Chinese, and two children were listed on the database as "other". A preferred language was not specified for forty-three children (7%), but can be presumed to be English.

The primary ethnic/racial categories of the adopted children were: 62% (369) white, 21% (124) black, and 8% (50) Hispanic (Appendix, Table 3). The remaining 9% (52) of the children were Asian/Pacific Islanders, Native American, Portuguese, Cape Verdean, or were unspecified.

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[2]Includes 15 adoptions completed by a Central Office administered Partnership Agency -- Project Impact

The number of black children adopted during FY'91 increased 82% over last year (Appendix, Table 4). Those completed in Western Massachusetts (+233%) and Boston/Brookline (+52%) contributed the most to the increase. White children adopted declined slightly (-3%) from last year, but accounted for 62% of the total adoptions in FY'91. Adoptions of Hispanic children also declined (-18%).

When comparing fiscal years, black adoptions reached a peak of 124 during FY'91. Hispanic adoptions "leveled-off" during FY'91 after peaking at 61 during FY'90 (Appendix, Table 4).

TIME IN PLACEMENT

The median[3] time from first placement to leaving placement was 3.4 years (Appendix, Table 5 and Fig.2). This is a slight increase over FY'90 when the median time a child spent in placement was 3.2 years before being adopted.

Children in placement for more than two years accounted for 81% of the legalized adoptions in FY'91 (Appendix, Table 5). As was true in FY'90, the majority of all children spent over two years in placement before adoption finalization (legalization) (Appendix, Table 6A and 6B).

TYPE OF ADOPTIVE HOME

Sixty-one percent of the children adopted during FY'91 were adopted by unrelated foster parents, 23% by families recruited to be an adoptive resource, and 15% by relatives. The areas in Western Massachusetts had the highest number of legalized adoptions by unrelated foster parents, 39% of the statewide total (Appendix, Table 7). Unrelated foster parents accounted for the majority of adoptions for all ethnic/racial categories (Appendix, Table 8). There was a greater tendency for white children to be adopted by recruited homes and black children by relatives.

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[3]The median represents the middle value of a population. In other words, half of the children have been in placement for a period of time greater than the median value and half have been in placement for a period of time less than the median value.

GUARDIANSHIP

Guardianship is the permanent plan designed to provide a stable, positive environment to children who cannot be returned home or adopted. To be considered for the program, a child must be at least age 12, or part of a sibling group where one sibling is at least 12 years old. In addition, a relative may be appointed (by the court) the legal guardian of any age child.

During FY'91, 224 guardianships were finalized. This represents a 5% decline from the number completed during FY'90.

When DSS initiated its guardianship program in FY'85, 54 were finalized. Guardianship activity reached a peak of 262 during FY'89 (see table below).

FISCAL YEAR	NUMBER OF GUARDIANSHIPS	% CHANGE
1985	54	--
1986	86	+59%
1987	180	+109%
1988	216	+22%
1989	262	+21%
1990	237	-10%
1991	224	-5%

The 224 guardianships[1] secured in FY'91 are presented by geographic location in the following table:

West	=	90
Northeast	=	31
Southeast	=	55
Boston/Brookline	=	46

Western Massachusetts had the most appreciable increase in guardianships (+27%) over FY'90.

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[1]Two guardianships were completed at Central Office.

SEX AND AGE

During FY'91, 108 (48%) girls and 113 (50%) boys secured guardianships. Compared to FY'90, this is an 11% decline in the number of girls receiving guardianships.

In FY'91, 103 children in 41 sibling groups received guardianships. A significant number of children under 12 years old were granted a guardianship, despite not having a sibling aged 12 years or older. However, fifty-one percent (114) of the total guardianships in FY'91 were granted to children in placement with a relative, where there is no age requirement.

ETHNICITY AND LOCATION

The predominant ethnicity of the children receiving guardianships in FY'91 varies by each DSS geographic location. In Boston/Brookline, black children secured the most guardianships (52%); Southeastern Massachusetts the most white guardianships (78%); and, Western Massachusetts the most Hispanic (28%). Hispanic guardianships reached a peak of 35 during FY'91.

Statewide, compared to FY'90, 15% fewer black and white children secured guardianships. Guardianships for both groups peaked in FY'89.

TIME IN PLACEMENT

Regulations state that a child must reside in the same unrelated placement for one year to be eligible for the guardianship program. Children in placement with relatives (51% of the total in FY'91) do not have the same time requirement.

Children who received guardianships during FY'91 spent a median time of 1.8 years from the most recent placement to the granting of a guardianship. Thirty-six percent of children were in placement for one to two years before receiving a guardianship (Appendix, Fig. 3).

ADOPTION AND GUARDIANSHIP SUBSIDY PROGRAM

Providing care and medical attention can be a huge burden for adoptive parents and guardians of special needs children. Families and individuals interested in becoming adoptive or guardian resources for these children are unable to do so without a form of financial aid. Subsidies, granted on the special needs of the child(ren), range from providing medical assistance (Medicaid) to providing financial assistance beyond the basic standard foster care rate[1] through the Supplemental Reimbursement Program.

At the end of Fiscal Year 1991, 3,705 children were receiving adoption subsidies and 604 children were receiving guardianship subsidies. This represents a 10% increase in adoption subsidies and a 19% increase in guardianship subsidies over the previous year.

During FY'91, 495 (83%) of the 595 adoptions received subsidies. Twenty-nine percent (146) of all granted adoption subsidies went to sibling groups while 28% (138) were issued to children with an emotional disability (see table below).

Children With Adoption Subsidies Granted By Type of Special Need
FY'91

Child Over Age 12	=	23
Physical Disability	=	98
Mental Disability	=	11
Emotional Disability	=	138
Sibling Group	=	146
Minority	=	43
Emotional Bonds	=	36

In FY'91, 151 (67%) of the 224 guardianships granted received subsidies. Compared to FY'90, this represents a 13% increase in subsidized guardianships granted during the fiscal year.

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[1] $13.65 per day for children under age 13 and $16.20 per day for children over age 13.

APPENDIX

Table 1. ADOPTED CHILDREN BY AGE AND SEX, FY'91

Age	Female No.	Female %	Male No.	Male %	Unspecified No.	Unspecified %	Total No.	Total %
<1	6	2%	4	1%	0	0%	10	2%
1 - 2	45	16%	63	21%	0	0%	108	18%
3 - 5	96	34%	80	26%	1	17%	177	30%
6 - 8	52	18%	70	23%	2	33%	124	21%
9 - 12	62	22%	61	20%	2	33%	125	21%
13 - 18	17	6%	25	8%	1	17%	43	7%
Unspecified	8	3%	0	0%	0	0%	8	1%
TOTAL	286	48%	303	51%	6	1%	595	100%

Table 2. ADOPTED CHILDREN BY LOCATION AND AGE, FY'91

Geographic Location	Age of children: <1 No.	<1 %	1-2 No.	1-2 %	3-5 No.	3-5 %	6-8 No.	6-8 %	9-12 No.	9-12 %	13-18 No.	13-18 %	Unspecified No.	Unspecified %	Total No.	Total %
West	3	1%	39	18%	63	30%	46	22%	39	18%	18	9%	3	1%	211	35%
Northeast	5	3%	35	21%	52	31%	37	22%	34	20%	7	4%	0	0%	170	29%
Southeast	1	1%	16	20%	25	31%	13	16%	21	26%	4	5%	1	1%	81	14%
Boston/Brookline	1	1%	16	14%	36	31%	26	22%	26	22%	10	8%	3	3%	118	20%
Central*	0	0%	2	13%	1	7%	2	13%	5	33%	4	27%	1	7%	15	3%
STATEWIDE	10	2%	108	18%	177	30%	124	21%	125	21%	43	7%	8	1%	595	100%

* Children adopted through a statewide contract with Project Impact at Central Office.

SOURCE: ASSIST Extract Tapes: (Run-Date: 1/18/92)
Research, Evaluation, and Planning Unit
Office for Policy and Program
Massachusetts Department of Social Services

Table 3. ADOPTED CHILDREN BY LOCATION AND ETHNICITY/RACE, FY'91

Geographic Location	Ethnicity											
	Black		White		Hispanic		Other		Unspecified		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
West	30	14%	143	68%	19	9%	11	5%	8	4%	211	35%
Northeast	17	10%	118	69%	20	12%	13	8%	2	1%	170	29%
Southeast	6	7%	67	83%	1	1%	5	6%	2	2%	81	14%
Boston/Brookline	67	57%	32	27%	9	8%	7	6%	3	3%	118	20%
Central*	4	27%	9	60%	1	7%	1	7%	0	0%	15	3%
STATEWIDE	124	21%	369	62%	50	8%	37	6%	15	3%	595	100%

* Children adopted through a statewide contract with Project Impact at DSS Central Office.

SOURCE: ASSIST Extract Tapes (Run-Date: 1/18/92)

Table 4. ADOPTED CHILDREN BY ETHNICITY/RACE, FY'85 - FY'91

Fiscal Year	Ethnicity											
	Black		White		Hispanic		Other		Unspecified		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	Source*
1985	41	10%	297	74%	32	8%	24	6%	6	2%	400	Log
1986	NA		NA		NA		NA		NA		412	Log
1987	79	18%	289	66%	31	7%	42	10%	---	---	441	Log
1987	65	14%	304	66%	32	7%	44	10%	15	3%	460	ASSIST
1988	90	17%	350	65%	33	6%	53	10%	10	2%	536	ASSIST
1989	72	12%	428	73%	49	8%	29	5%	11	2%	589	ASSIST
1990	68	12%	382	69%	61	11%	31	6%	12	2%	554	ASSIST
1991	124	21%	369	62%	50	8%	37	6%	15	3%	595	ASSIST

* Log = Manual Log Tabulations

ASSIST = Statistics generated from DSS database.
ASSIST Extract Tapes (Run-Dates: 1/21/88, 1/19/89, 1/16/90, 1/23/91, 1/18/92)
Research, Evaluation, and Planning Unit
Office for Policy and Program
Massachusetts Department of Social Services

Table 5. TIME FROM FIRST ENTERING PLACEMENT TO LEAVING FOR ADOPTION FY'87 - FY'91

FISCAL YEAR	.5 YRS OR LESS No.	%	>.5 - 1 YR. No.	%	>1 - 1.5 YRS. No.	%	>1.5 - 2 YRS. No.	%	>2 - 4 YRS. No.	%	> 4 YRS. No.	%	UNAVAILABLE No.	%	TOTAL
1987	16	3%	39	8%	66	14%	36	8%	126	27%	145	32%	32	7%	460
1988	21	4%	26	5%	39	7%	73	14%	191	36%	159	30%	27	5%	536
1989	8	1%	37	6%	44	7%	41	7%	272	46%	170	29%	17	3%	589
1990	16	3%	22	4%	35	6%	49	9%	247	45%	168	30%	17	3%	554
1991	10	2%	15	3%	33	6%	49	8%	268	45%	212	36%	8	1%	595

MEDIAN TIME IN PLACEMENT BEFORE ADOPTION

1987 2.9 YEARS

1988 2.8 YEARS

1989 3.1 YEARS

1990 3.2 YEARS

1991 3.4 YEARS

SOURCE: ASSIST Extract Tapes (Run-Dates: 1/21/88, 1/19/89, 1/16/90, 1/23/91, 1/18/92)

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Massachusetts Department of Social Services

Table 6A. CHILDREN ADOPTED BY TIME IN PLACEMENT, FY'91

Time in Placement (Years)	Ethnicity											
	White		Black		Hispanic		Other		Unspecified		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
.5 or Less	6	2%	1	1%	2	4%	1	3%	0	0%	10	2%
>.5 to 1	14	4%	0	0%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%	15	3%
>1 to 1.5	29	8%	2	2%	1	2%	1	3%	0	0%	33	6%
>1.5 to 2	37	10%	3	2%	5	10%	2	5%	2	13%	49	8%
>2 to 4	152	41%	68	55%	23	46%	14	38%	11	73%	268	45%
>4	128	35%	46	37%	18	36%	19	51%	1	7%	212	36%
Unavailable	3	1%	4	3%	0	0%	0	0%	1	7%	8	1%
TOTAL	369		124		50		37		15		595	

Table 6B. CHILDREN ADOPTED BY TIME IN PLACEMENT, FY'90

Time in Placement (Years)	Ethnicity											
	White		Black		Hispanic		Other		Unspecified		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
.5 or Less	12	3%	1	1%	1	2%	2	6%	0	0%	16	3%
>.5 to 1	18	5%	1	1%	0	0%	2	6%	1	8%	22	4%
>1 to 1.5	34	9%	0	0%	0	0%	1	3%	0	0%	35	6%
>1.5 to 2	43	11%	3	4%	3	5%	0	0%	0	0%	49	9%
>2 to 4	167	44%	31	46%	29	48%	13	42%	7	58%	247	45%
>4	99	26%	31	46%	22	36%	12	39%	4	33%	168	30%
Unavailable	9	2%	1	1%	6	10%	1	3%	0	0%	17	3%
TOTAL	382		68		61		31		12		554	

Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding-off.
SOURCE: ASSIST Extract Tapes (Run-Dates: 1/21/88, 1/19/89, 1/16/90, 1/23/91, 1/18/92)
Research, Evaluation, and Planning Unit
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Massachusetts Department of Social Services

Table 7. CHILDREN ADOPTED IN FY'91 BY TYPE OF HOME AND LOCATION

Geographic Location	Number of Children									
	Unrelated Foster Home		Recruited Home		Relative		Unknown*		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
West	140	66%	40	19%	27	13%	4	2%	211	35%
Northeast	91	54%	50	29%	29	17%	0	0%	170	29%
Southeast	51	63%	20	25%	9	11%	1	1%	81	14%
Boston/Brookline	74	63%	19	16%	22	19%	3	3%	118	20%
Central**	7	47%	6	40%	1	7%	1	7%	15	3%
STATEWIDE	363	61%	135	23%	88	15%	9	2%	595	100%

* Relationship to adoptive parent unknown at the time of data compilation
** Children adopted through a statewide contract with Project Impact at Central Off

TABLE 8. ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN ADOPTED IN FY'91 BY TYPE OF HOME

Ethnicity	Number of Children by Type of Home									
	Unrelated Foster Home		Recruited Home		Relative		Unknown*		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Black	77	62%	22	18%	21	17%	4	3%	124	21%
White	232	63%	88	24%	45	12%	4	1%	369	62%
Hispanic	34	68%	11	22%	5	10%	0	0%	50	8%
Other	13	35%	13	35%	11	30%	0	0%	37	6%
Unspecified	7	47%	1	7%	6	40%	1	7%	15	3%
TOTAL	363	61%	135	23%	88	15%	9	2%	595	100%

* Relationship to adoptive parent unknown at the time of data compilation

SOURCE: ASSIST Extract Tapes (Run-Date: 1/18/92)
Research, Evaluation, & Planning Unit
Office for Policy and Program
Massachusetts Department of Social Services

FIGURE 1. AGE AND SEX OF CHILDREN ADOPTED JULY 1, 1990 TO JUNE 30, 1991

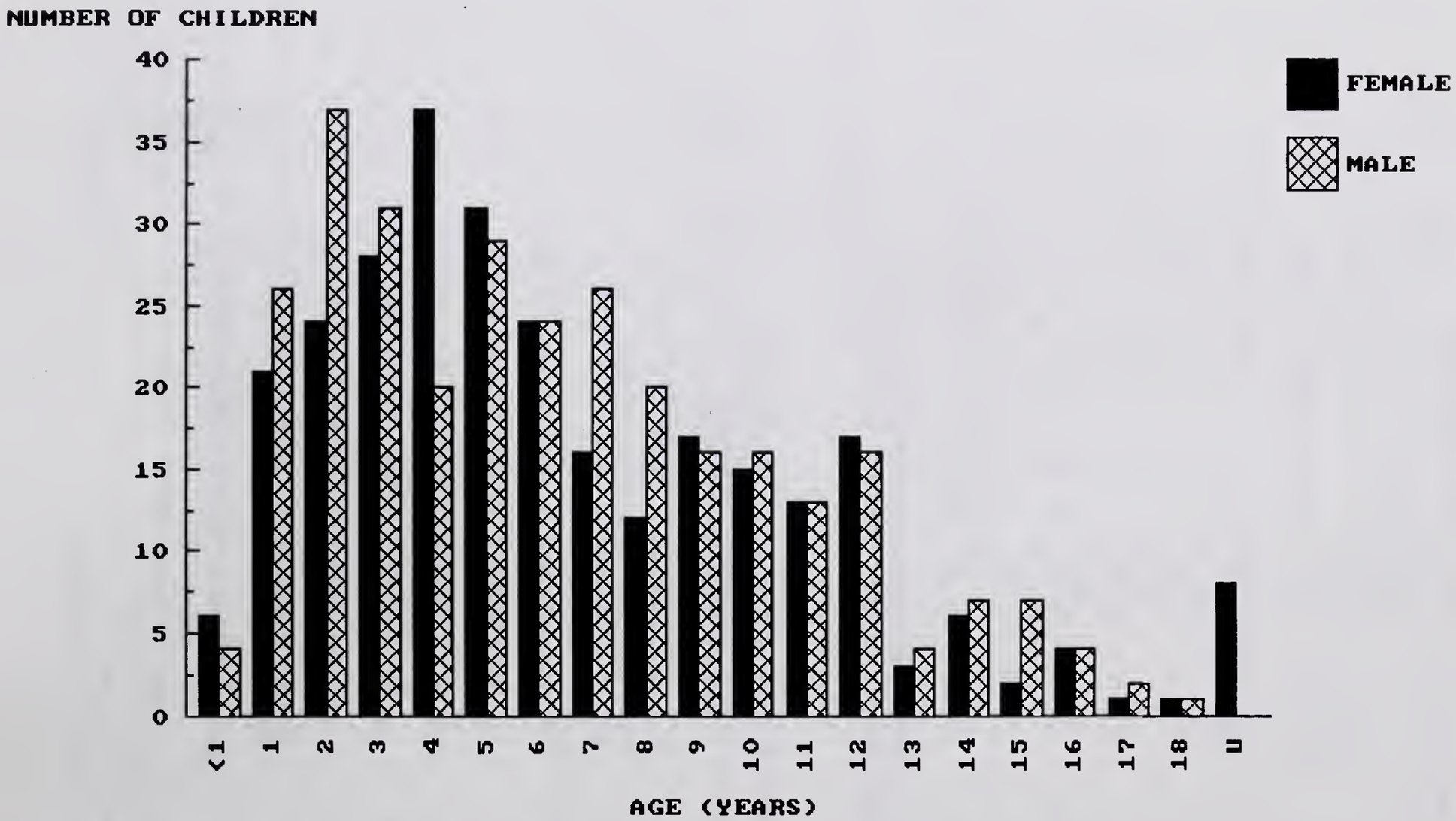

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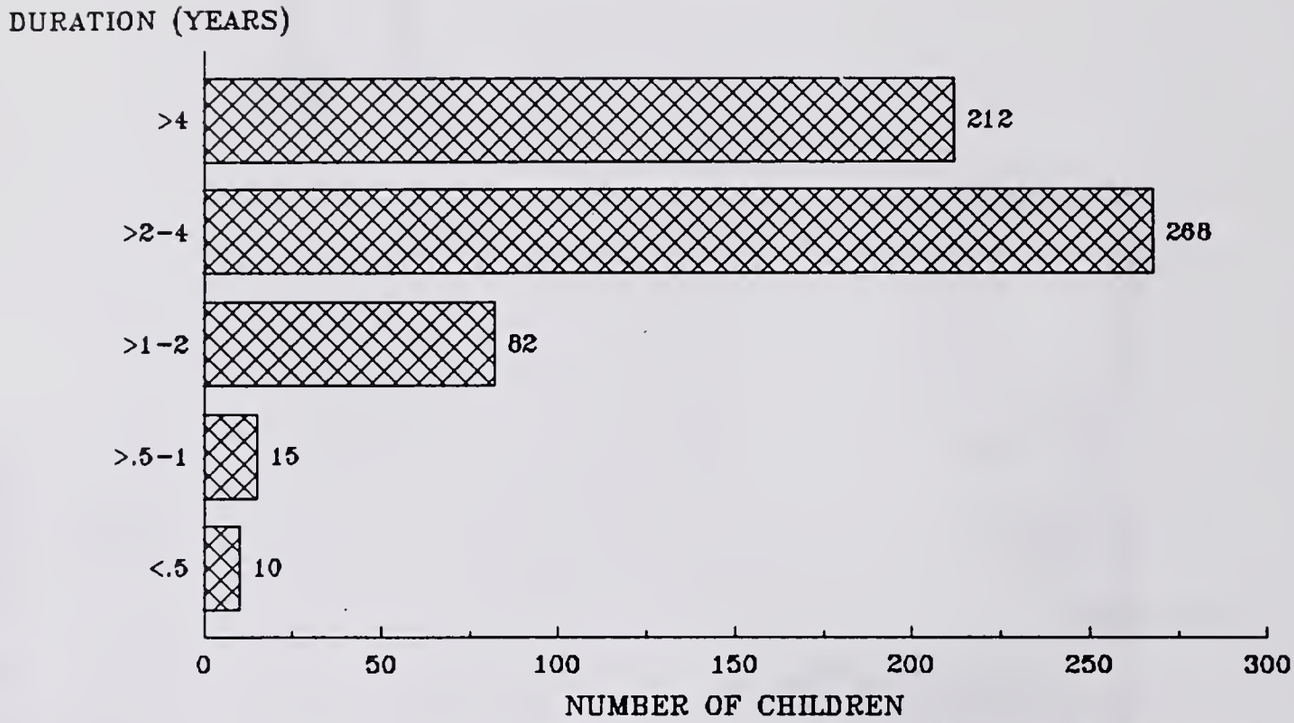
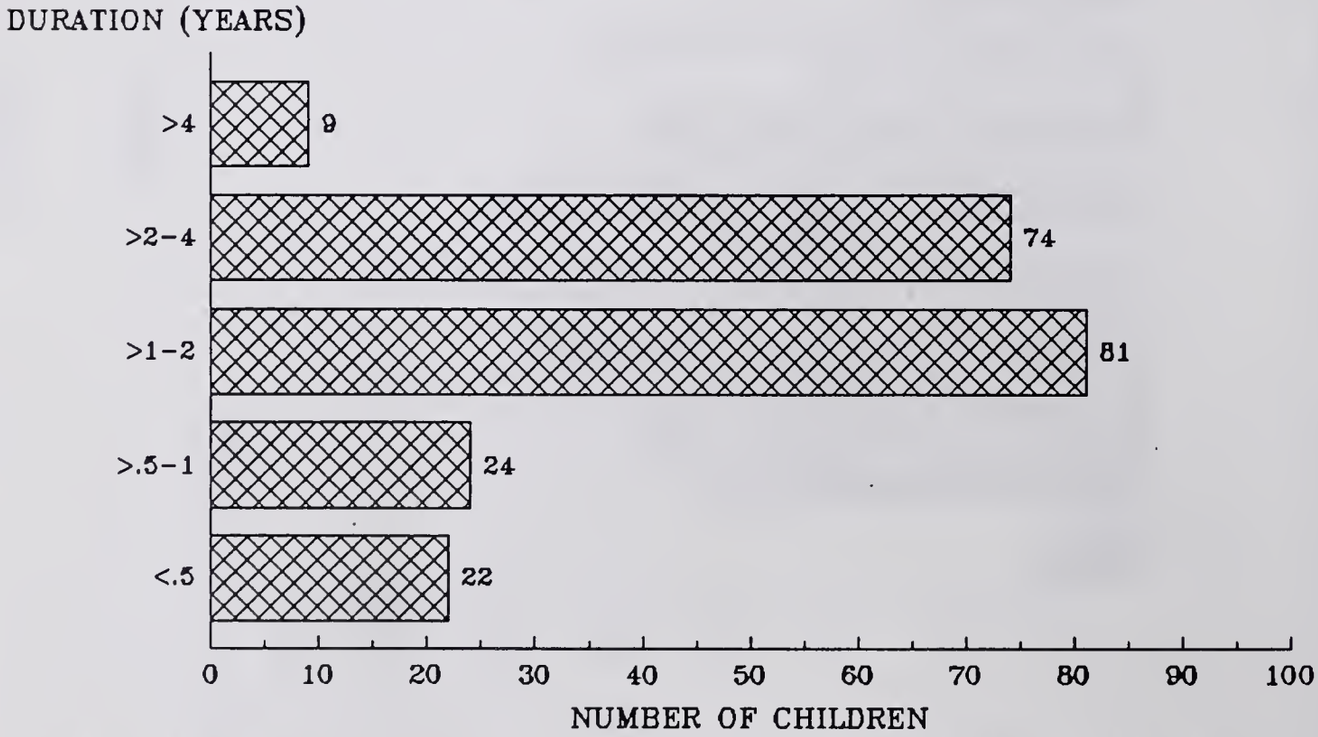
FIGURE 2. ADOPTED CHILDREN: TIME FROM FIRST ENTERING PLACEMENT TO ADOPTION LEGALIZATION, FY'91



Duration data are unavaiable for 8 individuals.

FIGURE 3. GUARDIANSHIP CHILDREN: TIME FROM MOST RECENT PLACEMENT TO GUARDIANSHIP GRANTED, FY'91



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Duration data are unavailable for 14 individuals